

The Promises of God

Acts 26:1-29

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Intro

Last week we were studying about how the Holy Spirit had instructed Paul not to set foot in Jerusalem, but he was intent on trying to reach the Jews for Christ and so he did not listen.

He then went to Jerusalem and in just seven days all the city was in an uproar because of Paul. He was soon arrested and would have been killed had not the Romans intervened.

He then went through several trials. We pick up with Paul as he is standing before King Agrippa. Here, Paul's defense reveals insights into his life and message. There are many insights for us in this as Paul tells about the promises of God.

These are insights into the promises of God.

I. God's Promise is Hope

A. All the promises of God are in Jesus

- If we were to do a word study about the promises of God, we would find that over and over, they are fulfilled in Jesus Christ.
- Paul says that all the fathers of Israel looked to the promises of God, and they were looking for God's anointed One to fulfill them.
- We need to come to a place of confidence in faith where we are standing in the promises.

Hebrews 10:23, "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;"

- Paul, in writing to the Corinthians said it this way...

II Corinthians 1:20, "For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us."

B. There is hope beyond this life

- Paul then told Agrippa of the hope that was beyond this life.
- That is the hope that puts everything in perspective.
- This world is terribly troubled

Illus – When we read the newspaper and there is such news of senseless killing in Iraq and there is trouble throughout the Middle East, we hope for something beyond this life.

- Paul was referring to the hope of having life beyond this earth, and when Jesus conquered death, he conquered it for us as well.

Illus – This world suffers because it is under Adam's sin, but there will be a new heaven and a new earth which is under the second Adam.

Romans 8:18-22 – Creation groans in waiting

II. He is the Light From Heaven

A. To stop kicking against the goads

- Paul is giving his testimony to King Agrippa and tells him about when his life was completely in the wrong direction.
- Jesus meets him on the road to Damascus and knocks him off his horse with light.
- He then says, “It is hard to kick against the goads.”

Illus – Goads were used to get an animal to go in the right direction. But if an animal was stubborn, they would kick against the goad. That was Paul, and in many ways, that was us.

God may allow a crisis to come into our lives to show us we’re going in the wrong direction. e.g.) Raul Ries.

- God uses situations, He uses the Word of God, and He uses the conviction of the Holy Spirit to move our lives in the right direction.
- The best thing we can do is to say, “Yes, Lord,” and not kick against the goads.

Acts 5:39, “but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; or else you may even be found fighting against God.”

B. To open blind eyes

- Here is the heart of Paul’s message – that transforming power of God!!
- Here is an accurate analysis of what’s wrong with humanity; “They are blind,” Jesus says, “and living in darkness.”

Illus – 2,000 years later, it’s still true. People are blind that cannot see end of the courses they choose nor of the forces behind the events of this world. They do not know where they are going. They are like blind men in a dark room groping and staggering to find their way through life.

- This sense of lostness is still everywhere. Jesus then explains the forces of darkness, “They are under the dominion of Satan,” He says.

II Corinthians 4:3-6, And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God... For God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Isaiah 42:6-7, “I will appoint You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the nations, to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon and those who dwell in darkness from the prison.”

III. God's Promises are Amazing

A. Complete forgiveness

- The message of the gospel is that God has made a way for our sins to be completely forgiven.
- The extent of that forgiveness is powerfully seen in Paul's life and testimony,
- In verses 9-13 Paul tells Agrippa how he did terrible things when he walked in blindness.

I Timothy 1:15-16, "It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life."

Psalms 103:12, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us."

Romans 8:33-34, "Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us."

B. And sanctified by faith

- This is the yet another powerful truth of the gospel of Christ – the transforming power of Christ is specifically seen in sanctifying of believers in Christ.

- It means that God is changing us to be like Him. That is His desire.

I Corinthians 6:9-11, "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God."

- How is this done? – Through faith...

Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."

Conclusion

The promises of God are "yes" and "amen," and he who promised is faithful. These are the words that we must stand on. This is the good news of the gospel. He has opened our blind eyes so that we may see that there is no hope in the world and eternal hope in Him.